



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEMBERS OF CISNEROS ORGANIZATION PLEAD GUILTY IN ARIZONA

PHOENIX - Eight members and associates of a racketeering enterprise known as the Cisneros Organization pleaded guilty here today to various charges including racketeering, contract murder, narcotics manufacturing and distribution, vehicle theft and VIN-switching. The defendants were: Luis Cisneros, 35, of Chandler, Ariz.; Felipe Cisneros, 32, of Mesa, Ariz.; Paul Eppinger, 44, of Phoenix; Angel Rivera, 40, of Phoenix; Raymond Llamas, 39, of Guadalupe, Ariz.; Richard Trujillo, 31, of Tempe, Ariz.; Benjamin Austin, 33, of Pomona, Calif.; and Lorena Cisneros, 36, of Chandler, Ariz. All are in custody pending sentencing, except Benjamin Austin who was already released and Lorena Cisneros who was released today upon pleading guilty.

This organization, headed by Luis Cisneros and his younger brother, Felipe, operated principally in Mesa and Chandler, Ariz. since at least 1993. The principal rackets in which the organization engaged were the theft and VIN-switching of motor vehicles and the manufacturing and distribution of large quantities of methamphetamine and cocaine. In addition, five of the defendants pleaded guilty to conspiring to murder, and murdering, Jose Moreno, Sr., and his 16-year-old son, Jose, Jr., in Lovington, New Mexico, on January 12, 2000.

Under the terms of the plea agreements, Luis Cisneros, Paul Eppinger, and Angel Rivera will be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of release; Felipe Cisneros and Raymond Llamas will be sentenced to 18 years in prison; Trujillo, Austin, and Lorena Cisneros will be sentenced to between three and five years in prison. Sentencing is tentatively set before Judge Susan R. Bolton on January 11 and 12, 2006.

Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona stated "these plea agreements call for appropriate sentences for all the defendants and ensure that the leaders of this criminal organization will spend the rest of their lives in prison. I applaud the U.S. Attorney's Office from the District of New Mexico, the FBI, the U.S. Marshal's Service and local law enforcement agencies for their extraordinary work on this case."

David Iglesias, U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico, stated that "this case resolution puts three of the most dangerous criminals from this criminal organization behind bars for the rest of their lives, with no possibility of parole. It also provides significant prison time for other members of the organization. The defendants's recognition of guilt eliminates the need for a six-month long trial and years of appeals. Moreover, in reaching these agreements, the government has honored the wishes of the murder victims's families. Justice is served by this resolution."

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This case was an Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force case denominated Crystal Shores II. The case was investigated by the police departments in Phoenix, Chandler, Mesa, and Tempe, Ariz., as well as Lovington, New Mexico, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the New Mexico State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives.

The prosecution is being handled by Greg Fouratt and Steve Yarbrough, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of New Mexico, Albuquerque and Glenn McCormick, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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